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CARDIN CALLS FOR UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, today called for a more consistent definition of sexual assault to better determine the extent of this violent crime nationwide. Senator Cardin's comments came at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs, entitled *"Rape in the United States: The Chronic Failure to Report and Investigate Rape Cases."*

"One of the most important functions of Congress is the oversight of our laws and whether or not all levels of law enforcement are enforcing our laws effectively and consistently. The statistics are disturbingly clear: nationwide, we are not doing an appropriate job helping those who have been victimized by sexual assault. Far too often, victims have been marginalized and re-victimized while perpetrators have not been held accountable. Nationwide, sexual assaults are being under-reported relative to other crimes.

"At a federal level, we need to be a better partner with state and local law enforcement. We need to ensure local police have adequate training and tools to respond to such crimes, that they have the capacity to help victims, and that they do not dismiss complaints without appropriate investigations. I am encouraged that cities like Baltimore have taken a hard look at how they respond to rape cases, which has resulted in more accurate reporting and a better emphasis on victims, but nationwide there must be a more uniform standard for handling sexual assault cases.

"I want to thank the victims who testified before our subcommittee today. We read statistics and reports, but hearing directly from victims puts a human face on this very serious problem. They are survivors and each of these individuals showed immense courage in sharing their story with us today."

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